

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-32 (Canceled).

Claim 33 (New) A method for sterilizing packaging sheet material in a filling machine for food packages, the method comprising in the following order:

applying a hydrogen peroxide solution to the surface of a packaging material while microorganisms on the surface of the packaging material absorb hydrogen peroxide, said hydrogen peroxide solution having a concentration of 10% to 50% by weight;

removing a substantial amount of hydrogen peroxide from the surface of said packaging material while retaining a residual or trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide absorbed by or located adjacent to any microorganisms present on said packaging material; and,

irradiating said packaging material retaining a residual or trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide absorbed by or located adjacent to any microorganisms present on said packaging material with UV light.

Claim 34 (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the UV light has a wavelength between about 200nm and 320nm, and wherein applying hydrogen peroxide to said packaging sheet material comprises immersing said packaging sheet material in a hydrogen peroxide bath at a temperature between 15 degrees centigrade and 80 degrees centigrade, for a time interval of from 0.5 seconds to 2 seconds.

Claim 35 (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said packaging material moves in said filling machine at a rate of 81.65 cm per second or greater.

Claim 36 (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the step of removing a substantial amount of hydrogen peroxide comprises blowing air against a surface of the sheet material, the air being heated to a temperature of between 80 degrees centigrade and 150 degrees centigrade.

Claim 37 (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said packaging sheet material is hydrophobic.

Claim 38 (New) The method of claim 33, wherein said UV light comprises polychromatic UV light.

Claim 39 (New): A method for sterilizing packaging sheet material in a filling machine for food packages, the method comprising in the following order:

applying a solution of hydrogen peroxide to the surface of a packaging material, said hydrogen peroxide solution having a concentration of 10% to 50% by weight;

applying a stream of air heated to a temperature of between 80 degrees centigrade and 150 degrees centigrade to the packaging sheet material so as to remove substantially all the hydrogen peroxide from the surface of the packaging sheet material while retaining only a trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide on said packaging sheet material; and

while the surface of said packaging material retains said trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide, irradiating the surface of the packaging material with light comprising a wavelength between about 200nm and 320nm.

Claim 40 (New): A method for rendering microorganisms present on the surface of packaging material non-viable, the method comprising in the following order:

advancing continuously said packaging material through a bath of liquid hydrogen peroxide, said hydrogen peroxide solution having a concentration of 10% to 50% by weight;

removing a substantial amount of hydrogen peroxide from the surface of said packaging material while retaining a residual or trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide absorbed by or located adjacent to any microorganisms present on said packaging material; and,

directing UV light onto a surface of said packaging sheet material while said residual or trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide remains on said packaging material.

Claim 41 (New) The method of claim 40, wherein removing a substantial amount of hydrogen peroxide comprises blowing air heated to a temperature of between 80 degrees centigrade and 150 degrees centigrade against a surface of the sheet material until only a trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide remains on said packaging sheet material.

Claim 42 (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the hydrogen peroxide has a concentration of 20% to 40% by weight.

Claim 43 (New): A method for sterilizing a packaging sheet material comprising, in the following order :

(1) applying a liquid solution of hydrogen peroxide to the surface of a packaging sheet material, and thereafter;

(2) applying a stream of air to said packaging sheet material so as to remove a substantial amount of said hydrogen peroxide from the surface of said packaging sheet material while retaining only a trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide absorbed by or located adjacent to any microorganisms present on said packaging sheet material, and thereafter

(3) irradiating the surface of said packaging sheet material with UV light having a wavelength between about 200nm and 320nm while said packaging sheet material retains said trace quantity of hydrogen peroxide;

wherein applying hydrogen peroxide to said packaging sheet material comprises immersing said packaging sheet material in a hydrogen peroxide solution having a concentration of 10% to 50% at a temperature between 15 degrees centigrade and 80 degrees centigrade for a time interval of from 0.5 seconds to 2 seconds;

wherein said stream of air is heated to a temperature from 80 degrees centigrade to 150 degrees centigrade; and

wherein said packaging sheet material is hydrophobic.